Synopsis of the Thesis Entitled

THE VISION AND THE LANGUAGE SKILLS OF THE SPIRITUAL WRITERS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY INDIA : A SELECT STUDY

By

RAMANADHAM RAMESH BABU

Research Director

Prof. V.C. SUDHEER
Department of English
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

SYNOPSIS SUBMITTED TO THE ANDHRA UNIVERSITY, VISAKHAPATNAM FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN ENGLISH

2013

SYNOPSIS

The aim of this research, as the title suggests, is twofold- to study the vision and the language skills of the Spiritual Writers of the twentieth century India. Since it is a select study, only two spiritual writers, Master E.K. and Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev – are studied.

Since the dawn of civilization, it is the spiritual leaders that stood as the backbone for preserving peace on the globe. Their messages have electrifying effect upon the peoples of the world. From a child to an old man, everyone is irresistibly inspired by their messages. It is the spiritual leaders that are responsible for laying stable bridges of understanding among the peoples of different nations, races, religions, cultures, traditions and environments more than any other group of people - politicians, scientists, artistes and businessmen. It is their powerful ideas, in an impressive language filled with love and compassion that united men and women and moved millions into action. For their thoughts are not fettered by any sort of trivialities, but rose beyond the boundaries of countries, continents, cultures and the narrow grooves of religions. Hence, their messages have acquired universal appeal. Spiritual masters are like the Light Houses of the World. Great souls in all parts of the globe have always tried to transmit their light to the people through their messages of love and compassion. It is not due to the advancement of

science and technology, nor due to the flourishing economy, nor due to the powerful government, nor even due to the religion that at least a small percentage of people are upright and law-abiding, but it is all due to the inspiration received from the Spiritual Masters.

One of the chief reasons for taking up the study of the **Spiritual leaders of India** is that they are the ones that have impacted everyone in this land– from a King to a beggar. India may perhaps be the only country where kings have deserted their thrones for becoming monks or yogis. The royal example is – Gauthama Buddha. Statesmen and scientists may be from the West, but prophets and divine incarnations are mostly from the East.

The purpose of this study is to establish the place of the spiritual leaders of India in the realm of English language and literature in general and in particular Indian writing in English. Though their names have been treasured in the history of Indian philosophy and spirituality and in the chapters of Indian culture and tradition, no specific attempt has been made to study their role in the world of letters, especially the style of the language of the post- colonial spiritual leaders of India. In this thesis, an attempt has been made to analyse the works of post colonial spiritual masters of south India, since no attempt has been made so far. This is

absolutely a maiden attempt in regard to the implications of their language in presenting the spiritual science to the humanity.

English has been chosen by these masters as the medium of creative expression for their thoughts which are essentially ancient. They used English with a passion for restoring the great spiritual tradition for the realization of humanity and also for carrying the essential message of that tradition across the seas. Another salient feature of these spiritual masters is that they never have consciously or even unconsciously worked on the language, but they are able to twist and turn the language according to the needs of the soul's expression and in the process, they have added different dimensions and variety of colours and smells to the English idiom paving way for a new prose style that is very original and distinctive. Through the vehicle of English, they have revealed the transparent, flexible and subtle shades of abstract philosophy and spirituality through many stylistic devices such as the use of figures of speech, analogies, alliterations, images, illustrations and rhetoric etc. In fact, spiritual leaders alone have been facing a strange situation in their mission of the fusion of East and West- they are forced to convey their message in an alien language. The context sometimes is, completely beyond the perception of the audience or readers due to their cultural and social background. It is indeed, a challenge for the spiritual leaders to

express the beauty of the complex concepts of the eastern philosophy, to the western audience, in a foreign tongue which is the mother tongue to them. But the captivating words and phrases of these spiritual masters have enlightened the west of the eastern thought.

In fact, any literary exercise is in the background of sound only. Indians have achieved mastery over sound due to their knowledge of the sound that they gained through the special utterances of certain powerful and systematic arrangement of the syllables that produce vibrant sound effect.

The East has been in love with the spirit and mind and the west has been in love with the matter and machine. The West has grown in scientific understanding of life and nature to shatter the superstition and the East advocated scientific doctrines relating to spirituality to splinter the gullible understanding of the nature and the energy of the Almighty. While the scientists from the West made giant strides in science and technology by discovering the radio waves, the telegraph, the photograph, the television and the electronics etc., the Eastern spiritualists made huge head way in rediscovering the properties of space, time, sound, colour and symbol. But the strange situation is that the eastern spiritualists deprecate the scientific achievements of the West and the western scientists disparage the profound understanding of the spiritualists of the

subtle aspects of nature and life. Both are thoroughly inadequate in their understanding of life.

To bridge this gap, and to enlighten to the world that both are complementary for the speedy evolution of the humanity, in the modern era, some spiritual organizations have served mankind without being identified with any particular belief, doctrine, theory, sect, religion or region. The basis of all these organizations is nothing but Spirituality. One such noble organization is- Theosophical Society which had created a spiritual revolution in the East and the West towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Indeed, 'the process of Globalization' began with the spiritual organizations and spiritual leaders only through the language 'English' which has become the medium of message. The Parliament of the World Religions in the year 1893 became the platform for the clarion call of Swami Vivekananda for the dawn of the historic event of presenting the Indian spirituality and mysticism to the West (the US) in their mother tongue- English.

Indeed, swami Vivekananda was the first and the foremost of the Indians to make use of English to present India to the West. Studying Swami Vivekananda's English is an exciting and enlightening study of English prose. A work will be called a piece of literature, when it is

imaginative in content and artistic in expression. The aesthetic elements, the employment of all finer aspects of language and the persuasive style of Swami Vivekananda's English prose made it literary and artistic, worthy of emulation by the East as well as the West.

After Swamiji, the mission was carried out by Paramahamsa Yogananda whose immaculate English had helped the west understand the core of the Indian philosophy and spirituality.

After Swami Vivekananda and Paramahamsa Yogananda, who represent the colonial period of India – (from 1863 to 1954) – in the same spirit and style, with ennobling language and elevated thought, we find in the post independence era, in South India, Master E.K. (1926-1984) from Andhra Pradesh and Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev (1957- the Living master from Tamil Nadu) carrying the torch, the mission of fusing the East and the West.

For choosing these two Spiritual Leaders, there are certain similarities between them-

First and foremost is that these two leaders of spirituality have made an effective use of English to transmit the wisdom of the East to the West

Human values and goals, religious practices and ideals, spirituality and its sublimity have been presented by these two Masters very

effectively through an extensive use of allegories and stories, parables and fables.

Secondly, both of them have explained the symbolism of the western scriptures in the light of spirituality, not in the background of religion. The best commentaries on the Bible are given by these two masters of wisdom.

Thirdly, both the masters have made efforts for the fusion of the East and the West, proving that there are no barriers of language, race, religion, boundaries and gender for the brotherhood of humanity. Their expertise lies in synthesizing ancient wisdom of the East and the modern vision of the West appealing to both young and old from the wide spectrum of the society.

Fourthly, spirituality is upheld as a science but not as a mere belief**;** and both of them have proved how and why spirituality is a great science.

These two masters have revealed to the world that spiritualism is nothing but a practical way of leading life in joy. Contrary to the popular belief, both in the east and the west that a saint should be a celibate and remain unmarried, both these masters are married and Master E.K. had displayed to the world how a man in the midst of a big family can lead his life like a song and dance and can virtually become a Master. So also, Sadhguru has

a family and proved to the world that family is an essential and integral part of Indian spirituality.

Both the masters have undertaken massive social welfare projects- through the establishment of schools and hospitals to bring about huge change at the academic and economic front. Transformation is possible with some method but not just teaching which makes people adore and worship their spiritual masters, instead of following and practising their teaching.

Both of them have dealt with varied subjects ranging from Atom to Spirit, Cosmos to Business, Education to Ecology, Naturopathy to Allopathy in different spiritual dimensions.

The study has begun with the first chapter "Introduction", the relevance of the teachings of the Spiritual Masters of India that made English as their vehicle of expression in regard to the fusion of the East and the West is discussed. How some exceptional spiritual masters have made English not only a medium of their spiritual expression, but how they have enriched the very language itself has been discussed.

The second chapter, entitled- "The Master and the World", discusses how Master E.K. demonstrated a synthesis in his life in regard to all aspects of human life. It is also discussed how he made a powerful

use of English language in synthesizing the East and the West through unraveling different shades of the scriptures has been discussed. Master E.K.'s mastery of English language in unfolding the essential wisdom related to human life and universe has been highlighted.

In the third chapter entitled- "The Mystic and the World", various themes of Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev have been analysed. His piercing wit, precision of expression, and his razor sharp intelligence in using the modern day vocabulary and analogies with unfaltering English in influencing millions of people across the world has been highlighted.

It is also discussed how a yogi or a mystic can be equally poised both at the World Economic Forum to discuss the economic issues with the political leaders and economists of international stature and how he can also be barefooted on the snowy Himalayas.

In the fourth chapter entitled, 'The Language and Technique'- an analysis and interpretation of the language and the mode of composition of the sentence structures of the spiritual writers, taking into consideration their social, moral and cultural implications have been discussed.

In the last chapter, the Fifth one – 'Conclusion', the possibilities of exploring the resources of the English language for making an effective

dissemination of the quintessential spiritual knowledge has been discussed. It has been highlighted how the speeches and writings of the spiritual leaders remain forever not only as a perpetual fountain head of instruction for the truth seekers, but also how they stand as models for those who have a passion for using English as a medium of communication.

It is a well known fact that those who wish to cultivate a good style in English, should, at least reasonably be well versed with the Bible. In the same way, those who (at least Indian writers) aspire for a flowery language and effective modern communication in English must be acquainted with the writings of the spiritual leaders.